

What Does the Bible Say About Tongues?

- What is the gift of tongues in the Bible? Let's start by defining what a tongue is. The short answer is that it is a spoken language. Some variation of the word tongue is in the Bible 166 times, but of course that will include references to the tongue, as in the organ in our mouth by which we speak. 36 of those times are in the plural, tongues, meaning it is referring to multiple languages. All these references are to either the tongue, or a spoken language. The first uses of both the singular and plural are in Genesis 10 when we are given an overview of how people spread out and formed languages, before getting the more detailed story of Babel in chapter 11. Genesis 10:5 "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations." Genesis 10:20 "These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations."
- This would mean the gift of tongues would be a gift concerning spoken languages. The plurality of the word notes that it is not a gift of a single language, but of many tongues. Consider how Paul defines the gift of tongues when speaking to the Corinthian church. He identifies it as speaking in "divers" or diverse tongues. It means it is not a singular language, but a gift to speak in many various languages. 1st Corinthians 12:10 "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:" 1st Corinthians 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."
- This can also be clearly seen in the promise of Jesus when giving the great commission. He didn't promise men would speak in one unknown or an angelic tongue, but in new tongues. Meaning the promise is to speak new languages, not one singular language. Mark 16:17 "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;"
- The reasonable question at this point is which languages would these be? Does the Bible show us an example of the Holy Spirit allowing men to speak in new and diverse languages? Yes, it does, and it even lists the tongues. On the day of Pentecost Jewish men from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem as God had commanded in the law. Jesus had commanded His disciples to go to the upper room, and wait on the Holy Spirit, in verses like the above-mentioned Mark 16. That day as they received the gift of the Holy Ghost, they went onto the roof top and began to preach. While preaching, Jews of many nations gathered to hear them, but what they heard was not the Hebrew or Greek language these men should have been expected to speak. Every man heard them speaking in their own language. God gave each of these men the ability to speak in one of the diverse languages that was needed that day. Acts 2:1-8 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? (8) And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"
 - To avoid any confusion, God even list for us what these diverse tongues were as the apostles preached to them. Acts 2:9-11 "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, (10) Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."
- The Bible then clearly defines the gift of tongues as speaking to someone in their language, that was previously unknown to you, by the power of the Holy Spirit. We will see as we study this

further though that the definition is more specific than that. The gift of tongues was given according to God so that unbelievers could hear the word of God. 1st Corinthians 14:21-22 “In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. (22) Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

- This brings us to our second point, what was the gift of tongues for? Why did God give this specific gift? To understand this, we must do as our previous verse implies and go back to the Old Testament. God prophesied or promised this event to Israel a couple of times. Paul is quoting Isaiah where God promised to give this sign to the Jews because they would not listen to His word. This quote is from Isaiah 26, where God explains that their prophets were corrupted, but one day Christ would come as that “Precious Cornerstone”, and He would offer them rest. The promise or prophecy is that with this, God will send men in the place of the prophets, who will speak to Israel in other languages; but they won’t listen to them. He uses the singular here, but as we saw in 1st Corinthians 14:21 above, it is not intended that He meant one language, as there it is quoted in the plural. The point is that each man would speak in one tongue at a time, the language that is needed by the hearer. Isaiah 28:11-12 “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (12) To whom he said, This is the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.”
 - This still doesn’t answer why God would choose this particular method though. That answer has already been seen, if we were paying attention. It is the same reason that God created laws thousands of years earlier that would require all the men of Israel to be present for the crucifixion of Christ. In the law there were three feasts that required all the men of Israel to come and gather at Jerusalem: The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. The latter pertains to the millennial reign of Christ, so we won’t spend time on it here. The first two are self-evident as to why God wanted everyone there on those days. Passover, which was attached to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was when Christ was crucified. While Pentecost, which was attached to the Feast of Weeks, was the day the Holy Spirit was given and the gospel preached. God knew that Israel would be scattered, He told them this much. So, He created holydays that would require every obedient Jewish man to be there and see that Jesus was crucified. Then He created Pentecost to be sure that they returned in time to hear these men preach and fulfill the promise of Isaiah 28. God in His wisdom knew that they would not only need these holydays to make sure they were there, but that they would need this sign because the men gathering would speak many different languages as we saw in Acts chapter 2. Deuteronomy 16:16 “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.” Leviticus 26:33 “And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.”
 - Now that we can see why God specifically chose to use diverse tongues as His sign for the Jews, why give a sign at all? Why did they even need to be supernatural instead of just gathering apostles who could speak many languages, such as the well educated Paul? Why intentionally bring together men who mostly lacked education in other languages? Because God wanted to mark something for the Jews, He wanted them to know this was a supernatural outpouring from God. It was to mark a massive change for the work of God and a moving away from Israel as His primary mouth piece on the earth. It was a sign that the gospel is for everyone and every language, not just Israel. It indicated that Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Which is why Peter quoted Joel 2, even though the passage doesn’t explicitly mention tongues. Because it does clearly explain why spiritual gifts were given. Acts 2:16-21 “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (17) And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (18) And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (19) And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: (20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the

moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: (21) And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- It should be noted that Peter doesn't quote the whole prophecy, because his intention is not to say that Joel 2 was fulfilled specifically by the day of Pentecost, something the context of Joel 2 makes very clear. We will return to this thought later though. The reason for quoting Joel is to note that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, in any context, is to note to Israel that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That is why Peter stopped on that statement instead of including the rest of the quote which pertains to Israel in the tribulation. Joel 2:28-32 "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (29) And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (30) And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. (32) And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."
- God had always given the Jews signs as proof of Him beginning something new with them. Moses was confirmed with signs, most specifically with the crossing of the Red Sea. Joshua was confirmed with the crossing of the river Jordan. Even Jesus noted His miracles as the confirmation of His ministry and being the Messiah on multiple occasions. These miracles were prophesied in the Old Testament several times as a sign of the coming Messiah. Jesus told John the Baptist to look at His miracles when questioned on whether He be the Messiah or not. Most importantly, God plainly states this was the purpose of the miracles that followed the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. They were a confirmation to the Jews that the message of the apostles was from God and not man. That these strange new doctrines of the gospel and the church, were the Word of God. Mark 16:20 "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
- Paul even explains why this is necessary in 1st Corinthians when explaining the difference between Jews and Gentiles. He said Gentiles require wisdom, that the message has to make sense to them. However, Jews require a sign, they need some miracle or wonder to prove the message is from God. This is at least in part because God trained them to be this way. He told them a prophet who is wrong even once in His prediction was to be stoned to death. The Jews expected supernatural evidence to support any message that could not be clearly seen in the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 1:22-24 "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
- We can even see this in practice in the Bible as Jesus multiple times noted the Jews were this way. Which is why He told them, that as proof that He is the Son of God, they would receive no other sign than the resurrection. It is the resurrection that God chose to declare Jesus as the Son of God, while tongues and other miracles were a sign that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Matthew 12:38-40 "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. (39) But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: (40) For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matthew 16:1-4 "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. (2) He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the

times? (4) A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.” Romans 1:4 “And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

- This then brings us to our third question, which is are tongues still being given as a sign from God? Is this gift still for the day in which we live? Consider what Paul told Corinth in the verses we just read. He said the Jews require signs and the Greeks want wisdom, but we preach Christ. Paul in saying so, clearly states that signs are not needed to reach people, but the gospel. So if tongues were a sign to show the Jews that God was giving the gospel to everyone, and Paul says we don't need to give signs, but the gospel, do we still need them? The answer is no, because God has already shown the Jews that He is reaching all men with salvation. He has already indicated that the Jews as a nation are put aside for a time, and that He will work through local churches. So now we don't need signs, we need the Gospel. Romans 10:18-21 “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. (19) But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. (20) But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. (21) But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
 - Actually it is very important to consider what Paul says in 1st Corinthians 13, since if the sign was intended to go away, one would think that God would say so. Does the Bible say that this gift will ever cease, yes actually. It says exactly that! Paul told the Corinthian church in 1st Corinthians 13:8 that “Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.” There couldn't be a clearer statement, but what is the context? In 1st Corinthians 12-14, Paul rebuked the Church of Corinth for carnally thinking that spiritual gifts were a sign of their closeness to God, for being proud of their gifts. The example he chose to focus on the most, and the one they were most guilty of abusing was tongues. So in the midst of this rebuke, he told them that if they wanted a gift to seek charity, that it was the greatest gift. In 1st Corinthians 12:29-31 He told them that they should want to have the gifts that would best let them serve their church, and that he would show them something better than tongues. “Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? (30) Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? (31) But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” This more perfect way is charity, a deep Christ like, sacrificial love as seen in the next verses, 1st Corinthians 13:1-2 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” So one of his evidences that charity is more important is that prophets will eventually fail, meaning God wouldn't be behind them anymore; since His prophets couldn't fail even once. That knowledge would vanish away, that one day men will forget whatever they have learned as age takes its toll. That tongues would cease, which clearly means God would cease or stop giving this gift.
 - God even explained why He would do this, He said because something perfect would take their place in 1st Corinthians 13:9-10 “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. (10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” This perfect replacement can be seen as one of two things. Either it is referring to the end of the apostolic age and the establishment of the age of local churches. Meaning when the apostles had done their job and the ministry of the local church had reached perfection or maturity, then sign gifts wouldn't be needed as the focus wouldn't be on Israel anymore. Or, the other equally possible answer is the Bible. Once God's Word was completed, there was no need of further revelation. Such things would only distract or take away from the Word of God. We are not to add to His Word after all. Regardless God said signs like tongues would cease, and even called them childish things, and insisting that the maturing of God's work would require them to be

put away in the next verse. 1st Corinthians 13:11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Tongues and other sign gifts are the childish things he is referring to in this verse, if you read it in its context.

- Is there other proofs of this in the Bible though? Yes there is. Consider that Paul was capable both of speaking in tongues and of the gift of healing. The scripture plainly states this of him in the earlier parts of his ministry. 1st Corinthians 14:18-19 "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: (19) Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue." Acts 28:8-9 "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. (9) So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:" Yet even with access to such spiritual gifts we see times in his life where in the later part of his ministry he was not able to do them. Interestingly his gift of tongues seemed to have ceased before healing as in Acts 28, he heals people but cannot speak to them in their language. Luke identified the people of Melita as being a barbarous people, meaning people who didn't speak a language that they could understand. Acts 28:2 "And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold." 1st Corinthians 14:11 "Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me." This is further proven by the fact that when they said in their language that Paul was a god, he didn't know to correct them. Instead it took time and the miracle of healing Publius to be able to share any witness with them. Even then we see Paul was not able to minister there because of the language barrier. Yet even the gift of healing passed from Paul, as he stopped healing people and instead left Trophimus behind when he was sick. 2nd Timothy was the last letter Paul wrote, meaning this was at the end of his life. 2nd Timothy 4:20 "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."
- Now I said we would return to our thoughts concerning Joel chapter 2. There we saw Peter quoted the passage as proof that the Holy Spirit being poured out was a sign that anyone could be saved. Yet we saw he was not quoting the passage as the definitive fulfilment of the promise. How do we know this? Look at the context of the passage. The promise begins by saying "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;" but after what? Well the chapter as a whole and the book until that point describes the tribulation period and some major events in it. The immediate context before it even sets the verse in the tribulation, as it discusses God's work of reaching Israel and the world in that time. Joel 2:23-28 "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*. (24) And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. (25) And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. (26) And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. (27) And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that* I *am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. (28) And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:" While the context after says that this passage is set firmly in the latter part of the tribulation. Joel 2:29-32 "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (30) And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. (32) And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." It must be especially noted what is said after Peter cut off his quote of the passage. Because the later half of verse 32 makes this

passage about Israel's future restoration and salvation. This should mean that in the Tribulation, Israel will see a pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the gospel preached through out the world, but does the scripture support that? In short yes they do, as we see God setting aside His 144,000 Jewish evangelist and the gospel being preached to the world in Revelation 14. How does this prove cessation though? Because in order for tongues to be a sign to the Jews in the tribulation, they would have to have ceased before then. If it is still in practice until then, that it would in no way be a miraculous sign for them as God prophesies it will be.

- One other argument for cessation, or the ceasing of sign gifts, is the hypocrisy of how they are "practiced". I am not discussing how errant the charismatic teaching of tongues is. I mean the way that those who believe it pick and choose which parts of the Bible they believe in regards to gifts, without any real Bible reasons. The same passage that promises the gift of tongues also promises healing and casting out devils. It also promises handling snakes and drinking poison without harm. Mark 16:17-18 "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; (18) They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Yet the vast majority of those who believe that tongues or healing are for today scoff at those who handle snakes or claim to drink poison. I believe casting out of devils is for today because that existed before the pouring out of the Spirit, it was always by prayer and fasting not a spiritual gift, and it was never mentioned as a sign like these. Yet we see the others all being used on the same level, just look back at Acts 28. So why do only a few extremist believe in the dangerous ones? Why do only charlatans practice faith healing as opposed to the biblical prayer of faith? Why or even how are classes taught in most Pentecostal churches on how to speak in tongues? Because the Holy Spirit no longer gives such gifts, but men try to imitate them. This is why it is proven over and over that snake handlers refrigerate the snakes before in order to make the cold blooded animals docile. That faith healers never go to the hospitals but only "heal" people with invisible ailments. Many have been caught using the most outrageous tricks, including shocking people with electricity, to make people feel something happened. If healing and such gifts were for today, then the evidence would be unmistakable, but instead the evidence is that such things are not of God. These gifts when employed in the Bible cleared out entire villages of their sick and allowed thousands to hear the gospel in their language. People were laid at the edge of the street so that the shadow of Peter passing over them could heal them. Paul healed the entire island of Melita as mentioned in Acts 28. People proven dead before many witnesses were raised. Yet today such "miracles" either happen only to those with unproven illness or behind closed doors without any real witnesses, defeating the entire purpose of such gifts.
- So if tongues and other sign gifts are not for today, what does that mean for those who practice such things? Many sincere people have felt something, so what was it? God warns you to try the spirit of anything to see where it comes from. 1st John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." So where does the modern charismatic movement come from? We will look at that, but first let me answer the question anyone who has practiced tongues should have right now: what was I feeling when I spoke like that? There are a few answers to such a question, however some of them are not so nice. For some, especially the men teaching such things, the answer is the devil or an unclean spirit of some kind. The devils certainly have power to control someone's tongue when they are working in that person's life. Matthew 9:32-33 "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. (33) And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel." However, I am not convinced that this is the answer for many sitting in the congregation of such churches. In my experience those people have been indoctrinated with such things. They have been taught their whole lives that they could not know for sure they were saved until receiving such a second blessing. They were put through classes to learn how to speak in such a way. They watched their brothers and sisters lifted up above them for being able to do it. In other words they have been indoctrinated, peer pressured, and bullied to do such things. Just as the Holy Spirit can move you, or unclean spirits can move someone, so to can your own spirit. This is why God warns to rule your

spirit, and to not be someone who is defenseless to such things. Proverbs 25:28 "He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls."

- Even more importantly God warns that when He moves someone they have control of their spirit. Most teachers of tongues or practitioners present it as an over whelming and uncontrollable outburst. That they are urged by the Holy Spirit in such a way that they cannot hold it back. So they shout unintelligible words without control. They are slain in the spirit and fall to the ground or burst into dance. Yet God plainly says His prophets have control over themselves and do not behave in such a way. 1st Corinthians 14:32-33 "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (33) For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Be careful though, in the context He is not just speaking of prophets, His argument is that out bursts of tongues or people speaking over one another is not of God, and he is merely using the prophet as an example.
- The most important proof of this is in 1st Corinthians 14:2 "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Notice the spirit mentioned is with a lower case "s". The King James Bible always recognizes the Holy Spirit with a capital "S", but your spirit with the lower case. The Bible itself says when a man does this in an unbiblical way, like the church at Corinth was, it is with his own spirit leading him to do it, and not God. If that is not clear just look at what Paul says in 1st Corinthians 14:14 "For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." He said it is his spirit that would be praying, if it is in an unknown tongue, and not the Holy Spirit.
- What does the Bible then say about the modern charismatic movement and the idea of speaking in tongues, as it is presented in churches today? Is it biblical to speak in some unknown or angelic tongue? If not then why do people believe it is? Mostly it is because of misquoting a few verses or blatantly lying about what some of them say. The most egregious is the claim that 1st Corinthians 14 says an "unknowable tongue". It plainly says "unknown" see for yourself, look back to 1st Corinthians 14:2 above. We can also see it in 1st Corinthians 14:13 "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret." When God mentions it should be a tongue that can be interpreted. This is because as we have already seen , the tongue is not an unknowable tongue, but a language that is unknown to the speaker. The word "unknowable" never even appears in the Bible, there is no such thing as an unknowable tongue in the Bible, only tongues or languages that are unknown to the hearer or speaker.
 - What about the tongues of angels? Does the Bible mention this as being the gift of tongues? No, not at all. This phrase does at least appear in the Bible, however it is in no way defining the gift of tongues as being this or even including it. In fact it would be to the contrary, as the point of the verse is hyperbole. 1st Corinthians 13:1-2 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." The point being made is that even if you could do such extreme things, but had not charity, it would be worthless. It is likened to understanding all things and moving mountains, it is an extreme idea used only to emphasize how important charity is. Even if you believed it was included in the gift, we could see by now it would be useless unless speaking to an angel. Since chapter 14 defines it as an empty gift unless there is someone to understand what is being said.
 - Another common lie is the use of Romans chapter 8, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The word uttered means spoken. If God says it cannot be uttered then by definition it cannot be tongues, which are spoken or uttered languages. So this verse could not possibly be speaking of tongues, since what the Holy Spirit is doing is something that cannot be uttered. What this verse is actually talking about is when someone like Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was so over whelmed that she could not put her prayer into words. He is saying when we are like

that, then the Holy Spirit takes those groanings or cries to the Father. The point is that when you can't speak, He still knows your heart.

- The other argument we see, beside changing words, is that 1st Corinthians 14 mentions that the person speaking in tongues is speaking to God. This is perfectly true that it says this, the issue is how you understand what that means. So let's consider the verse, and we will see that the statement is a rebuke and not a positive thing. The point of the chapters is that Corinth was abusing spiritual gifts, especially tongues. The point of chapter 14 specifically is how they abused tongues, and the first point on the list is how important it is that we understand one another. 1st Corinthians 14:2-4 "For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. (3) But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. (4) He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."
- What is the point of spiritual gifts? Paul said from the beginning, in chapter 12, that they were for edifying the church. That gifts are not for lifting up or edifying yourself, but the church. 1st Corinthians 12:7-14 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (8) For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (9) To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (10) To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: (11) But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (12) For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. (13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (14) For the body is not one member, but many." This is the whole argument of chapter 12. That all of our gifts are to equip us to do our part in the body. That every person is like an organ, not serving himself but the body of believers. So when he says that prophecy or telling the word of God edifies the church, but tongues edify you, it is a rebuke not a compliment.
- When he says that you speak to God, it is because only God can understand when the language being spoken is not the language of any of the hearers. He makes that point abundantly clear when he in the same passage says that someone speaking in an unknown tongue is speaking to the air. 1st Corinthians 14:9 "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." His point is not that you are speaking to God in some supernatural way, every believer who prays is talking to God in a supernatural way. You don't need tongues for that. The point is simply that you are speaking to the air, that no one understands or is profited by this, and the only one who could possibly understand you is God. It is a rebuke, not a compliment.
 - He even illustrates this with the trumpet. He explains that a trumpet must give a distinct sound or else it is just worthless noise. That if no one understands the note being played, then it is impossible to profit from it in anyway. 1st Corinthians 14:6-11 "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? (7) And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? (8) For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (9) So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. (10) There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification. (11) Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian

unto me.” Tongues were meant for revealing, teaching, or prophesying. They were a way to miraculously teach doctrine to someone separated by a language barrier. So if there is no one to understand the language being spoken it is vain and selfish endeavor to do so.

- If you continue reading the passage that is made even more clear. 1st Corinthians 14:12-20 “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. (13) Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. (14) For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (15) What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (16) Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? (17) For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. (18) I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: (19) Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue. (20) Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” We are once again told to not be children and to not selfishly look to puff up ourselves, but to edify the church. If I preach my sermon or sing my song in a language no one in the room understands, men may marvel at me, but no one was helped. When someone sings in a language that is unknown to the audience the focus is taken off of the message and put on the performance of the singer. The song is no longer a means of edifying the church, but edifying or puffing up yourself as men marvel at your performance. This is even true in prayer as men will focus on how passionately you speak, since they cannot understand the words of the prayer to focus on them. That is why he mentions not being able to say amen in agreement to the prayer. Paul told Corinth they were being childish and carnal for making the service about them and their ability instead of edifying the church. Again this is a rebuke, not a compliment.
 - He even illustrates this in the following verses by asking how an unbeliever would respond to men using the service to speak in languages that are not understood. That all the shouting would be perceived as madness, like how the apostles were first accused of being drunk until men of diverse languages realized what they were saying. 1st Corinthians 14:21-25 “In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. (22) Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (23) If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (24) But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: (25) And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”
 - God even gives rules for how to handle multiple languages being spoken in a church service. Ultimately it is to limit the number of languages, don’t let people speak over one another, and to have the men teaching not the women. This shows us you can have a multilingual church but it has to be done with decency and order. That men can’t use it as an opportunity to be proud of what languages they

can speak, but to use the languages that can minister to the congregation. When the speaker's language is not the native language of the congregation, then he needs to have an interpreter, or to remain silent. God forbids speaking in a tongue that is not interpreted for the hearers. He says in that situation pray in your mind between you and God. 1st Corinthians 14:26-36 "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (27) If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. (28) But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. (29) Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. (30) If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. (31) For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. (32) And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (33) For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (34) Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. (35) And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. (36) What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"

- This is why he doesn't forbid people to speak in other languages, but requires that it is done correctly. So as to not create confusion, lift up the speaker, or cause division. 1st Corinthians 14:39-40 "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. (40) Let all things be done decently and in order."
- Ultimately God challenged the church of Corinth just as He challenges you today, let him that thinks himself spiritual or a prophet acknowledge the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 14:37-38 "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. (38) But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The Bible never teaches the modern charismatic version of tongues, but instead out right condemns it. You have to decide if you will follow your spirit or the Holy Spirit? Will you follow the doctrines of men or the Bible? This modern tongues movement is just that, modern. It has existed for only about 100 years, out of the nearly 2,000 years of church history. It was brought about by Charles F. Parham and built up by his followers. It is not a Bible doctrine but a movement of men, the charismatic movement. God defines tongues as spoken languages, and the gift of tongues as speaking a language not previously known to you. He says plainly that the gift was for a sign to Israel and for reaching the lost. He clearly states that the gift would cease once such childish things were no longer needed. He forbids using unknown tongues in a church service unless someone is there to interpret to the congregation. He condemns those who use tongues in the church as trying to puff up themselves instead of the church. He says such people cause confusion and make the cause of Christ look bad. He even says that it is their spirit leading them to do so and not the Holy Spirit. Every aspect of the charismatic gift of tongues is condemned by the scriptures, the question is will you acknowledge that? Will you follow God's commands or you feelings and experiences?